

REMARKS:

The Office Action dated March 22, 2006, has been received and carefully reviewed. The following remarks form a full and complete response thereto. Claims 1-3 are pending in this application and are submitted for reconsideration.

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Tansini (EP 1302581). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

The present application claims priority to JP 2002-369557, which was filed on December 20, 2002. Tansini published on April 16, 2003, after the priority date of the present application. Accordingly, the Applicant submits herewith a verified English translation of the Japanese priority document pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.55 and submits that the priority document supports each of claims 1-3. Thus, Tansini is not prior art to the present claims and the rejection is improper. Accordingly, the Applicant requests that the rejection be withdrawn and claims 1-3 be allowed.

If for any reason the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by telephone, the Applicant's undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension together with any additional fees may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account No. 02-2135.

Respectfully submitted,

By

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian A. Tollefson", is written over a horizontal line.

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